

**Abstract 378**

**TITLE:** Using Anthropology to Build Better Prevention Programs

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**ISSUE:** HIV prevention programs must often be designed for populations that are understudied (e.g., gay men and injection drug users). To further complicate program design, preventionists must build behavioral interventions in those programs that address complex human issues that are understudied (e.g., human sexuality and drug use).

**SETTING:** Tucson, Arizona. The target audience is preventionists working with a variety of communities including gay youth, gay adults in bars, African American men, gay Latino men, and Latino youth.

**PROJECT:** To help design better prevention interventions, the Prevention Services department of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF) budgets resources to do ethnographic/anthropological work with all target populations. These resources allow project coordinators to collaborate with anthropologists to design qualitative evaluation projects including focus groups, in-depth interviews, and field observation. These evaluation projects help answer questions for project coordinators about the communities they try to serve. The anthropological work focuses on aspects of human sexuality, program design, and HIV/STDs. The evaluation projects always include written reports by the anthropologists.

**RESULTS:** In four years of using anthropologists and their local research, SAAF prevention coordinators have learned more about their target populations through: 1) the creation of over 15 anthropological reports that describe the individuals and the communities being served; and 2) the reports' promotion of discussion among anthropologists, preventionists, and communities. The anthropological work has also enriched the relationship between community and preventionist as results are reported back to the target community.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Anthropologists really enrich prevention efforts by often bringing a very different perspective into the program design process. AIDS service organizations on limited budgets can often afford anthropologists. Contracts with anthropologists should be clear and detailed.

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